

Translated by Defense Language Branch

WHY DO WE ATTACK HANKOW?

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I

It is only of late that the Japanese public have actually adapted themselves to war-time conditions. Whether they like it or not, they have been obliged to prepare themselves against a protracted war. However optimistic one may have been so far, one cannot, under the present acute situation, but be serious, and give up one's optimistic views. To tell the truth, between those who are leading a peaceful life at home and those who are fighting in sweat and mud on the Chinese front, there has been a gap -- a mental gap wider than the geographical sea separating the two sets of the Japanese. However, this difference in the war-feeling of the two groups is being gradually eliminated, as the Japanese at home have also come to be further and further pinched in their daily life under the enforcement of the war-time control and mobilization of goods and materials.

All the Japanese have at last come to adjust themselves to the prospect of a protracted war.

But it seems at least to me that the public in general are too calm and quiet. Although the frenzied enthusiasm we saw in the early days of the war did not seem a happy phenomenon, this calmness at this juncture can neither be approved unconditionally. It even seems to be a kind of resignation on the part of the people in the face of the stern realities.

Needless to say, the situation that Japan is now trying to steer through is so difficult that it cannot be surmounted unless the whole of the people, in a national movement led by a high ideal, press forward vigorously with the force of an avalanche.

With this in view, the writer cannot help feeling uneasy at the existing state of affairs.

II

Even before the battle of Hsiichow was started, the siege of Hankow had been a subject for dispute. There were some who stressed the strategic importance of Hsiichow and so greatly counted upon the result of the battle of Hsiichow, while others stood against the further advance of the Japanese troops into the interior, for fear of the futile enlargement of the fighting area, as it would endanger the Japanese national finance as well as the maintenance of the occupied territories. Nevertheless, in order to assure victory, it had become absolutely necessary for the Japanese Army to occupy Hankow.

Along the Lung-Hai Railway, the Japanese force started their march on the Wuchang-Hankow area in close chase of the enemy retreating from Hsiichow. But after the occupation of Langfen and Kaifeng, their vanguard was held up at Chungmowhsien, where part of the embankment of the Huangho (Yellow River) was broken by the Chinese Army.

Through the broken ombankment, the turbulent waters of the Hoangho are now reported to be running southwards, sweeping over the Lung-Hai Railway, through the Yingho, the Hwaiho and Hungtse Lake into the former course of the Hoangho and out into the sea.

By this flood, thousands of villages, large and small, were inundated with the loss of many lives and tens of millions of yen worth of crops and property. According to the reports of the Chief of the Reconstruction Office of Honan Province, the flood area is 2,300 sq. kilometers, the inundated villages more than 2,600, the washed-away houses more than half a million, and the devastated rice-fields two million and a half ge (TN: about 62,500 acres). This may well be called an act in "The Tragedy of East Asia" caused by the China Incident. I wonder if the great River Huangho is going to change its course for a seventh time since the dawn of history.

Thus, the advance of the Japanese troops along the Lung-Hai and the Peiping-Hankow railways was checked for the time being, and the main endeavours of the Japanese forces were directed towards restoring public peace in North China by sweeping away the remaining enemy forces in and around Shansi and other districts. But at the same time the Japanese Army's intention to attack Hankow was clearly revealed by their "up-the-Yangtze" strategy.

On June 11, the Japanese Navy demanded the withdrawal from the fighting area of all ships of third powers by announcing: "From this day on our Navy shall commence her attacking operations upon Hankow."

On the very next day Anking was taken by the cooperation of our Army and Navy while Tsienkiang was seized by the land force on June 17. Hukow was occupied on July 4 and July 26 saw Kiukiang fallen into the hands of the Japanese Army. Lying on the Yangtze River, Kiukiang holds an important position; it is only 50 li distant from Hankow. Further, on August 2, our Army occupied Hwangmeiksien in Hupeh Province, a vitally strategic point to defend Wuchang and Hankow. It is 36 li from Hankow. Consequently, the Chinese at Hankow were greatly dismayed. According to foreign dispatches, by the end of July the whole of the main diplomatic personnel of the Chiang Kai shek's Government including Wang Chung-hui, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had left for Chungking. Most other non-military government offices also removed to Chungking while some fled to Hangyang-hsien or Kunming-hsien. Thus, Hankow had turned into a purely military center, only offices of communications, transportation, munitions supply, and war industries remaining there.

The Russian Embassy had already moved and the rest of the foreign embassies and legations at Hankow had completed removing to Chungking with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the end of July.

At any rate, the defense of Wuchang and Hankow was got ready by Chiang Kai-shek in a purely military formation. But about the final steps for defense, the Communists and Kuomintang did not agree. The former insisted upon fighting to the last while the latter insisted on retreating as usual after some amount of fighting. It is reported, however, that the insistence of the Kuomintang on finally abandoning Hankow prevailed upon the rest.

Chiang Kai-shek drew two defense lines for Hankow and Wuchang -- an outer and an inner one. The outer line ran from Kueih in the west of Anhwei Province through Yingshan, Taihu and Kiukiang, to Nanchang. At Kueih, Yingshan and in their environs the Hupeh, Szechwan and Yunnan Armies were posted, while at Kiukiang Nanchang and in their neighbourhood were posted the five divisions of the newly organized Kwantung Army besides more than 100,000 troops gathered from Kiangsi and Hunan. The inner defense line ran from Wushengkwan through Macheng and Huangkang to Echeng, and was defended by the Hunan Army newly created by Chang Chih-Chung, Chief of Hunan. And most of the Central Army was reported to have been gathered under the command of Chen Cheng around Wuchang and Hankow, defending the Peiping-Hankow Railway at the section between Hankow and Wushengkwan, and the Canton-Hankow Railway at the section between Wuchang and Changsha. But the outer line had already been broken through by the Japanese offensives.

III

Japan's objective in attacking Wuchang and Hankow lies not so much in the taking--though important in itself--of these big political and military footholds of the Nationalist Government, as in the pursuit of the two vital results to be produced by the Chiang Kai-shek Government's retreat into the interior and becoming a mere local power. One of them is the opening to be made for the estrangement of the Communists from the Kuomintang by cutting the so-called red route and isolating each sphere of influence from the other. The other is the possibility for disappointing the Powers by the degeneration of the National Government into a petty local regime and causing them to give up their support of it.

These two are the fundamental objectives of Japan in this campaign, though there are minor motives such as destroying the utility for the Chinese of the Canton-Hankow Railway, and securing the economic and military utility of the Yangtze Kiang for the Japanese.

Let us consider the first objective. The Communists, as I have said before, strongly insisted upon defending Wuchang and Hankow to the last. The Hsin Hua Jih Pao, a Hankow Communist paper, published under the joint signature of such leading Communists as Chen Sao-yu (Wang-min), Chou En-lui, and Chin Pang-hsien (Po-ku), an opinion regarding "the third stage of resistance". The gist of it is as follows:

"The Spanish people held Madrid, their capital, against their enemy for two years. Why can't the brave labourers and soldiers of Wuchang and Hankow defend their cities? The crucial point is whether or not we take actual defensive steps, and not whether we are in a position to defend the cities or not.

"The most important factor to work throughout "the third stage of resistance" is the political and economic power of Wuchang and Hankow. The success or failure in the defense of the two cities greatly affects not only the third stage of resistance but the home and foreign affairs of China herself. Consequently, the third stage of resistance is closely knit with the course of this defense.

"What are, then, the effective measures for the defense of Wuchang and Hankow as well as for the resistance of the third period?

"On the military side, it is necessary to strengthen the defense of Wuchang and Hankow, and also of the Yangtze River, and to reinforce our air force and air defense preparations. Workers, students and citizens should be organized into a self-defense corps and given military equipment and training.

"On the political side, a committee should be formed at once for a general mobilization for the defense of Wuchang and Hankow with the representatives of not only the Nationalist Military Committee and Garrison Headquarters but also of the Communists as well as of the industrial, agricultural, or commercial circles, cultural organizations and also women's organizations.

"Besides the above-mentioned items, the following may be suggested as expressing general opinions regarding the military side of the third stage resistance. Namely, the reinforcement of the equipment and disposition of the front, unification of command, organization of different army corps, military training of the masses, development of guerilla tactics, improvement in the method of conscription, etc.

"Moreover, as an active preparatory step for the third stage resistance, a political department should be at once established in everyone of the corps of different classes."

Apparently, these claims of the Communists were not accepted by the Kuomintang.

The loss of Wuchang and Hankow will affect the Communists more severely than any other group. It will, at the same time, prove not a small blow to the Soviet Union who is helping China through the Chinese Communists. The fact that the Japanese are advancing on Hankow instead of Kwangtung, will delicately affect the relations between the Soviet Union and Britain, the two main supporters of China at present.

Let us now consider the second objective. The Powers now stand at a turning point to decide their attitudes towards the China Incident. On one hand they seem to intensify their antipathy against Japan and more talks are abroad about their intended aid and loans to help China directly. But on the other hand there are some signs indicative of their approach towards Japan.

From this point of view we pay special attention to the discussions held at the British Parliament on July 26-27.

Sir Sinclair, a member of the House of Commons, said: "It is difficult for us to send any fleet or army to the Far East to support the Chinese Army. So we should advance loans to China instead."

"In order to curb Japan's foolhardiness," stated Lord Eribank (TN: phonetic), "I propose to raise the customs tariff on the goods imported from Japan into the British Isles and Dominions and, if necessary, to abrogate the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1911."

"It is better to check Japan in some way rather than to aid China", insisted Lord Cecil.

"Japan has repeatedly avowed her respects for British rights and interests in China and the maintenance of the open-door policy there. But in many cases, she has acted to the contrary. We don't want to hear Japan harp on the same string any more. What does the Government say about it?" demanded Milne.

Whereupon Mr. Butler, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, replied: "This problem, together with others is to be talked over in the coming conversation between Sir Robert Craigie, Ambassador to Japan, and Japanese Foreign Minister UGAKI, and its outcome is hoped to make clear to us the sincerity of the statements of the Japanese Government. Our Government has never taken any step to weaken the resisting power of Chiang Kai-shek's Government against Japan, and the fact that our government has not introduced a bill making it possible to advance loans to the Nationalist Government does not mean that it refuses to help them."

Premier Chamberlain, after explaining his reason for withholding permission against the advance of loans to China, said: "Other methods of aid are now under consideration. British rights and interests in China are so old and extensive that we cannot allow them to be lost. So we will resort to every means to defend them. When a prospect opens for sure success, our Government will not hesitate to take some measure to stop hostilities in the Far East."

The practical demands that Britain is making of Japan at present are: Free passage of the Yangtze for her ships, rehabilitation of the British staff in such leased railways as the Shanghai-Nanking, Tientsin-Pukow and Peiping-Shanhaikwan Railway, payment of the bond interests, reopening of the British factories in the Japanese occupied area, etc.

Just now the Ugaki-Craigie conversation is under way with close public attention at home and abroad.

As for German influence in China, we can say so much that General Falkenhause and other military advisers who were robots, as it were, the contradiction lying between the German national policy and the tenacious pursuit of German merchants after commercial interests in China in the sale of munitions and others, have finally left their posts.

French and Russian military instructors are said to have taken their places.

IV

Carried out in such circumstances as the above, the attack on Hankow will be sure to mark an important period in the Sino-Japanese hostilities. But at the time when Hankow is about to fall, the Russo-Japanese border dispute has suddenly come up with aggravating force and has cast a new light upon the situation.

As we all know, it is a serious border fight waged around Changpenfeng between Japan and Russia since July 12. After unsuccessful negotiations, a fierce battle was fought around Shachaofeng and Changpenfeng on July 29-31. On August 1, some Russian airplanes flew over and bombed Korean and Manchurian border-lands where fierce fighting is still going on at present.

Since the Manchurian Incident, cases of Russo-Japanese border dispute have been innumerable, but none has been more serious than the present one. The case is so critical that there is no knowing when a war will break out between the two countries. It is possible that this dispute may develop in such a direction as to completely change the phases of the China Incident.

Concerning this border dispute, some suspect, from the close Russo-Chinese relations, the working of some cooperative arrangements between the two countries at this crucial moment. This suspicion seems well grounded when we consider the above-described importance of Hankow in Russia's Chinese policies as well as in the policies of the Chinese Communists especially at this juncture when the city is about to fall. A further thought may lead us to conclude that the political crisis in Europe, caused by the quick advance of the Germans in Czechoslovakia, having been alleviated by the recent Anglo-German understanding, it temporarily allowed Russia to act more freely in the Far East. Or some may attribute this turn of tide fundamentally to a British policy to restrain Japan.

Still others try to explain that this is an attempt of the Russian Government externally to divert the attention of the people from Stalin's too rigorous purges, which might otherwise result in internal unrest and conflict, or that this is a Russian demonstration against the case of 3rd General Lushkow (TN: phonetic) who recently escaped from Russia to the protection of the Japanese Government.

The writer, however, would like to take it as a mere border dispute, though a rather complicated one, limited to the affected region which both parties are fighting to occupy, each believing and claiming it as their own.

But from the general objective conditions of the present Russo-Japanese relations we cannot pass it over as a mere local border dispute. It entails questions of critical nature.

Every Japanese is deeply interested in, and anxious about, the developments of Russo-Japanese relations.

At the beginning of this article, the writer has said that the Japanese as a whole are very quiet just now, so quiet that the writer cannot help feeling uneasy about it. Probably the Japanese people are beginning to realize the seriousness of the situation they are confronted with. Their apparent calmness is not a mere sign of their resignation but something more deeply rooted.

Many of us will quite agree with a certain radical political leader who said to the writer:

"It seems that a kind of apathetic resignation is prevailing among the present-day Japanese youth. I feel depressed not to hear them discuss foreign or internal social questions vigorously."

Be that as it may, it is most important for the Japanese public to know the seriousness of their present circumstances, for in doing so, they can never be vain-glorious. We firmly believe that they will in time rise from the present chaos with their own means of solution for this crisis. They will then surely display their genuine courage toward their home and foreign questions.

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TRANSLATION CERTIFICATE

I, Charles D. Sheldon, Chief of the Defense Language Branch, hereby certify that the foregoing translation in the attached Document is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a correct translation and is as near as possible to the meaning of the original document.

/s/ Charles D. Sheldon

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漢口を何故還つか

尾崎秀實

一
日本社會の臨時體制も此の頃になつてやつと本體になつて來た。否、
應なしに長期戰の邊が本決りになつて來た。いくら樂天家でも、現狀
を甘く見てゐたものでもこゝまで來て見れば眞刻にならざるを得ない
正直なところ今までは未だ何といつても大體で汗みどろ、花まみれで
居つてゐる人たちと日本にゐるものとの間には海の隔があるだけでは
なく遙かな距離があつたのだ、だが、物資調節、物資動員で日常生活
をぎりぎり締めつけられて來てはこの兩者を隔てて來た實感の溝も埋
まらうではないか。

いつの間にか日本も長期戰争の氣持へになつて來た。

だがこれは私一人の考へ過ぎかもしれないが社會一般があまり驚か
であり過ぎるような氣がする。戰争の初期に見たような一種の狂熱的
な現象もあまり實感しないが、今のようないきさつも無條件で容認して
いゝかどうか躊躇を感じさせられる。それは一種現狀に對する諦めに

似たものであるような氣さへする。

云ふ迄もなく日本が今期り切りうとしてゐる維局は生易しいものではなく、悉らくは國民が一つの尚道なる理想に導びかれ一つの國民運動の形をとつて崩雪の如き前進運動を遂すので無ければ克服し難いような性質のものなのである。

これと思ひつゝ現状を省みる時一種の不安を感ぜずには居られないのである。

二

徐州會戰の始まる前から漢口攻略が問題になつてゐた。徐州の戰略的地位を重要視し、これに期待をかけるむきもあり、また、戦野の従らなる強大を氣づかひ、それに伴つて生ずる占領地奴經營の困難、日本自体の經濟の困難の増大に對する顧慮からして更に異地へ進軍することに對して反對するむきもありはしたが、戰果を確保するためには漢口攻略は絶対に必要なる條件となつて來てゐたのである。

蘭海方面に於ては徐州敗敵の追跡戰として武漢攻略戰が始められた。併しながら蘭封、開封占領後に支那軍の手によつて行はれた黃河

の堤防決潰は日本軍の前進部隊を中牟に阻んだ。
 黄河の濁流は、龍海線を押し切つて南下し、黄河より淮河に入り、洪澤

湖から魯南河に流れて海に注いでゐると報ぜられてゐる。

初から魯南河に流れて海に注いでゐると報ぜられてゐる。
 大小数千の村鎮を水底に葬り、致千万圓の農作物と財産とを押し流
 し幾多の人命を失はしめた河南省建設廳長よりの報告によれば、浸水面
 積二千三百平方キロ、浸水部等（一千六百餘村、流失家屋五十餘万戸
 流失田二百五十万畝）大黄河は有史以來七度その河道を變じようとす
 るのであるか。それはまさに日支紛争の生んだ「東亞の悲劇」の一齣
 である。

龍海、京漢線方面よりの進軍はかくて一應停止されたのであつたが
 北支に於ては山西方面の掃蕩を始め各地の治安回復に主力が傾けられ
 たが、武漢攻略の姿勢は、長江逆行戦術によつて活潑に示されたので
 あつた。

六月十一日海軍は「帝國海軍は本日をもつて漢口への進攻作戦を開

始する」旨を發表し第三艦隊船の立退きを要請したのであつた。

十二日には陸海軍共同作戦により安慶を攻略、陸上部隊は十七日に

水を占領した。七月四日には漢口を占領した。次いで二十六日には長江流域の要衝九江も我が手に陥ちたのである。九江は漢口下流五十里の地結にある。更に望上部家は八月二日湖北省の武漢防衛の要衝黃陂要塞を陥入れた。漢口を去る三十六里の地結である。かくて漢口は既に大動搖を招きつゝある。外電の傳へるところによれば蔣政府の外交部長王寵惠以下外交部要人は七月末までに全部重慶に移轉した筈でありその他非軍事官廳も大部分漢口を引揚げ、その大部分は重慶に一部は衡陽及び昆明に移轉した筈で今や漢口は單なる軍事上の中心となり、通信、運輸、軍需品供給、軍需産業關係の基幹所だけが残つてゐるのである。

各國大公使館もまたソ聯の如きは既に移轉を完了して居りその他いづれも七月末までに外交部とともに重慶に移轉を完了した筈である。蔣介石の純粹に武力のみに集中した武漢防衛の態勢はともかく一應とものへられた。もつとも武漢防衛についての最後の方針決定、即ち武漢を死守するか、或ひはまた例によつて一戦の後放棄するかについ

ては國民黨側と共產黨側とに對立があり、共產黨側はあくまで死守を唱へたが、結局國民黨側の最後放棄に決定したと傳へられてゐる。

蔣介石の武漢防禦陣は、内外を二線に分ち外線を安河南岸の西部固防から、英山、太湖、九江、南昌の線に互るものとし、湖北軍、四川軍及び雲南軍を固防、英山方面に配備し、新編廣東軍五箇師と江西、湖南の總軍十余万を九江南昌方面の防衛に當らしめ、内線を武漢關、麻城、資岡、鄂城を連ねた線に置き、湖南省主席程潛中の新たに編成せる湖南軍をこの線に配置し、中央軍系の大部分は武漢を中心し漢口、武漢の京漢線、平漢、長沙間の京漢線を守備せしめ、張敬奎ら湘軍に當ると傳へられた。

然して第一線は既に破れ去つたのである。

三

日本の武漢攻略の目的は、國民政府の政治軍事上の重要據點を掌握することの重要性は無論のことであるが、寧ろ、その結果、長江沿河の地方政權に墮落して奥地に移轉することからして生じる二つの大きな

事實に期待してゐるといふことが出来るであらう。第一は、所謂赤色ルートを中断し、共產黨と國民黨との地盤を分離せしめることによつて、國共兩者の分裂に導びかんとすること、第二には、全く轉落し偏在する國民政府に對する列國の期待を棄てしめ列強をして國民政府援助から手を引かしめんとすることにゐるのである。

此の以外に、興漢線の利用價值を失はしめることとか、長江の經濟的、軍事的利用價值を我方に確保する等の諸多の利益が存在してゐるが根本的にはその二つに盡し得ると思はれるのである。

第一の問題についていへば、共產黨側は武漢死守を強硬に主張してゐたのである。漢口にある共產黨機關紙「新華日報」は共產黨の領袖陳昭陽、王明周恩來、秦邦憲（博古）の署名をもつてする第三期抗戰問題に關する意見を發表した。

これを要約すると次の如くである。

西班牙人民はマドリッドを二年に亘つて保持した。武漢の勞働者及び中國軍隊の勇氣を以て武漢を保持し得ないことはあるまい。

肝要なる點は武漢保衛の一般的可能條件如何にめらずして事實武漢保衛工作を進めて行くか否かにかゝつてゐるのである。

第三期抗戰全問題の重要なる組成部分と中心點は武漢の政治經濟であり、武漢の保衛の成否が第三期抗戰に對して極めて大なる影響あるのみならず、且つ内政外交方面に對しても大なる影響があり、従つて第三期抗戰の成敗は武漢保衛と極めて重要なる關係がある。

然らば武漢保衛並に有效なる第三期抗戰工作の具體策如何といへば軍事方面に於ては、直接武漢防衛の強化、揚子江防衛、空軍力及び防空の設備加強、勞働者、學生及び市民を以てする自衛隊の組織及び武裝訓練の必要

政治方面では、即刻保衛武漢總動員委員會の設置。これが組織分子は國民黨部、軍事委員會、及び衛戍司令部代表の他に共產黨、其他工農、商、學、文化、婦女の各代表とする。

以上の他第三期抗戰の軍事問題に對する一般的意見としては、前線部隊の武裝配備の強化、指揮の統一、各種兵團の組織、民衆武裝の指

導、ゲリラ戦の發展、新兵擧法の改善等

なほ第三期抗戦の積極的準備として各級部隊中に政治部の速時建立
この共産黨側の主張は遂に國民黨の容れるところとはならなかつた
ようである。

武漢喪失は共産黨にとって何よりも打撃であり、また支那を共産黨
の側から援助しつゝあるソ聯にとつても少なからざる打撃を與ふこと
となるであらう。日本が漢口を日没し、廣東を目指さなかつたこと
は支那に對する二つの現在の支柱たる、ソ聯と、イギリスとの關係に
對し微妙なる影響を及ぼすものと見る事が出来るであらう。

第二の問題については、列強は今や、自らの立場を決定すべき重要な岐路に立たせられるに至つてゐる。一面に於ては日本に對する惡感情は一層つのるよう見え、また直接支那を援助する借款その他の援助がしきりに新聞にのぼりつゝあるが、他方に於ては、日本に對する接近の事實もまた無いではないのである。

七月二十六、七兩日に互つて行はれたイギリス議會における討論はこの點から見て頗る注目すべきものがある。

シンクレア下院議員は『支那軍援助のため無條件乃至軍隊を極東に派遣するのは困難だからその代り支那に借款を與へねばならぬ』と述べエリバンク卿は『日本に反省を促すためには日本から英本國及英帝國に輸入される物資の課税を引上げ、必要とあれば一九一一年の日英通商協定の廢棄を断行せし』と述べ

セシル卿は『對支援助よりは寧ろ日本にある種の壓力を加ふべし』と主張

ウォールドロー・ミルン議員は『日本は支那に於ける英國の利益を

重、門戸開放の存在を門々言明してゐるが、事實は之に反するもの多
く、吾等は日本のこの種の聲明を聞き飽きてゐる之に對する政府の所
見如何と述べ、

バトラー外務次官は「此の問題については他の問題とともに近く行
はるべき貞克駐在英大使クレイギー氏と宇垣外相との會談に於て討
が行はれる筈で、日本の駐日が諒意なりや否やこの會談の結果により
明かにされよう、

英政府は縣政權の對日抵抗力を弱める如き手段は何等とつたことはな
いが英政府が對國民政府借款を可能にすべき法律案を提出しなかつた
ことは、對縣援助を拒絶することを意味するものではない」と之に答
へてゐる。

チエンバレン首相は借款の許可を與へなかつた事情を同様説明し「そ
の他の方法による援助につき目下考慮中である、英國の在支關係は古
くかつ廣汎で英國としてはこれを障礙にすることは坐視出来ない。
北京問題に對しても政府は介至り成功の可能性が見えるに至れば隨

境紛争の重大化である。

この事件の経緯については、に詳記するまでもないが、七月十二日以降におけるソ聯との間の張鼓峰をめぐる深刻なる国境紛争である。外交交渉の不成功に次いで七月二十九日から三十一日にかけて、沙草峰及び張鼓峰附近に於て激烈な戦闘が行はれ八月一日には遂にソ聯飛行機は国境を越えて朝鮮及び滿洲國內國境地帯に侵入を致し引續き此の部分における激烈な戦闘行為が行はれてつゝある。

滿洲事變以來ソ聯との國境紛争事件は實に枚舉のいとま無き程である然しながら現在の瞬間程重大な意味を帯びたことはかつて無かつたのである。それは確かに日ソの全面的衝突の危険を胎んでゐる。

この問題の發展如何によつては日支事變は全くその相續を一變することとなるであらう。

人々はこの問題について、直ちにソ聯邦及支那の間の密接なる關係に思ひ到つて兩者の間に何等かの協同動作の打合せがあるのではないかとの疑念を抱つようである。まさに且夕の命懸を救ふる漢口が、共

産業及びソ聯の對支政策に於て特に重要なること前述の如しとするならば、確かにかくの如く考へることには理由が無いことではないのである。更に一層穿つた考へ方によれば、歐洲におけるドイツのチェッコに對する急激なる進出による政局の危機は、英獨兩者の最近における諒解によつて一應解消し、ソ聯の極東政策は一時的に自由の範圍が高められたのであると、或ひは更にイギリスの日本對策のための考慮に出た政策に基づくものであるとの説をなすものもある。

或ひはまた、スターリン修正工作の行き過ぎによる内部的不安、矛盾を誤魔化すために外部に注意をへさんとする試みであるとし、更にまた、先頃ソ聯を脱出亡命來つたりユシコフ三等大將事件に對する示威であるとする。

筆者はたゞこれを單に現地に於ける局地的國境紛爭事件のやゝこじれたものと解したのである。整爭地點をあくまで自國領なりと信じこれを占むるために實力を以て争ひつゝある一地點における紛爭事件なりと解したのである。

そうはいふものの勿論日ソ兩國の間に構はる客觀的條件はこれを單なる國境における一紛争事件として止めない深刻なる危機を包蔵してゐることはいふまでもないのである。

對ソ問題の發展については日本國民の一人一人が深い關心を抱いてゐるところである。

筆者はこの一文の最初に於て日本人一般が非常に感かであることを述べ、その靜かなことに對する不安を述べた。

恐らくは民衆はいづれも自分たちの直面する困難がなみなみならぬ深刻なものであることを今や知り始めてゐるのであらう。

この靜けさは、あきらめよりも更に一層深いところに根ざすものがある。

或る革新的な意圖を藏する指導的な政治家は筆者に、「若い人たちの間に殆んど無氣力が支配してゐるように見受けられる、今日彼等の口から對外問題、國內社會問題に對して活潑なる討論の聞かれないことはまことに淋しいことである」と語つた。

我々もまたこれに近い感じを受ける。しかし大衆が自らの立つところの困難が甚だ深いところに根ざしてゐると悟ることは重要なことであり、このような場合には決して空景氣は出ない筈のものである。我々は大衆がやがて深いところから自らの解決策を提げて登場するのを確信してゐる。その時こそ内に對しても外に對しても眞實の勇氣が發揮されるに違ひないのである。